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Thomas • Dongan

an address

by

Franklin • M. Danaher •



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DOUGAN



Thomas Dongan,  
Second Earl of Limerick.

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Governor of New York,  
August 27, 1683–August 11, 1688.

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A N A D D R E S S

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BY

FRANKLIN M. DANAHER,

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## A D D R E S S .

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N the 22d day of July, 1686, to follow the language of the document, "Thomas Dongan, Lieutenant and Governor of the Province of New York and Dependencies in America, under his most sacred Majesty, James the Second, by the Grace of God, of England, Scotland, France and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith, and so forth, and Supreme Lord and Proprietor of said Province of New York and its Dependencies," by virtue of his commission and authority and the power in him presiding, granted a charter to the town of Albany, confirmed its ancient rights, gave it privileges, exceptional to the age, and made it a city.

Two centuries later, the city of Albany, still in possession of its chartered rights, hallowed by time and vivified by the gladsome light of liberty, as it had found expression in a free country, where the rulers derive their powers from the consent of the governed, and not through the parchments of men, by the grace of God, kings, celebrated the bi-centenary of the event.

It did full honor to the character and patriotism of Thomas Dongan; it held him in grateful memory, and, because of the charter, it extolled his merits and sung his praises.

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During the celebration, the young Irish-Americans of Albany inquired into his life, examined his record as Governor of colonial New York, traced his career as a soldier and patriot, and found that he was more than a grantor of charters, and resolved to lay myrtle, as well as cypress, on his tomb, and to keep his memory fresh and perpetuate his deeds for all time, in the place which he protected as a soldier, and fostered as a governor; which he made historical by his presence, and a city by his favor.

For those reasons was this organization called the Dongan Club. It is proper that it should place among its archives some record of the life and services of this illustrious man, but the task should have been given to other hands.

To rake, amid the ashes of the burned-out fires of two centuries ago, for the facts that go to make the history of Dongan's life, would be a delightful task to one of the *literati* or to a man of leisure; the vistas of life in the colonies, which it reveals, the insight which it gives into the character and methods of the hardy colonists and brave aborigines, the richness of soil and the profusion of nature which the search develops, are among the rewards of his industry, but to a man busy in the every-day walks of life, the task is beyond his time and I regret that I accepted the duty, even upon your kind and flattering request.

The details of Dongan's private life are buried with him; we can only form an estimate of his character and of his ability as a ruler, from the records of his acts and

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sayings while Governor of New York. Their complete exposition would be a history of the province during his time, an undertaking both beyond my powers and your patience, so I will plead what I may hereafter say in part performance of your request, leaving to the future historian of the club, the honor and pleasure of doing a full measure of justice to this noble Irishman.

Thomas Dongan, the second earl of Limerick, was born at Castletown, County of Kildare, in Ireland, in 1634, of an ancient and representative Catholic family. The surname of Dongan is said to be of Milesian origin. It is as ancient as Ireland's history. It appears as Donnegan, Dungan and Dongan; its earliest Irish form being O'Dunnagan. The Irish Dongans are among the families descended from Heremon, the seventh son of Milesius, of Spain, from whom were descended the kings, nobility and gentry of the ancient kingdoms of Connaught, Dalriada, Leinster, Meath, Ossory; of Scotland, since the reign of Fergus Mor Mac Earca, in the fifth century; of Ulster, since the fourth century; of the principalities of Tirconnell and Tirowen, and of England, from the reign of King Henry II down to the present time.

O'Hart names the Dungans or Dongans among the families of English descent in Kildare, where Dongan was born, but places the Dongans, earls of Limerick, among the Anglo-Norman families of Limerick and Clare. It may be that the Dongans migrated to England in the early centuries and returned later to Ireland, or coming directly from England, their name, in the course of time, was Hibernicized.

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In 1387 Dermot O'Dongan was presented by the Marquess of Dublin to a benefice within the diocese of Limerick, and in 1392 the king granted to Thomas O'Dongan, chaplain, and then an admitted Irishman, the liberty of using the English tongue and law. The old annalists speak of the ancient sept of O'Donnegan, who were extensive proprietors in the half barony of Orrery, County of Cork.

In 1395 John Dongan, a Benedictine monk, Bishop of Derry, was transferred to the See of Down; Henry IV made him Seneschal of Ulster, among other high and memorable offices; he died in 1412.

Later, John Dongan, who had been a second remembrancer of the exchequer, in the time of Henry VIII, was a proprietor in the city of Dublin, and in the Counties of Carlow and Clare. He died in 1592 and devised his estate to Walter, his eldest son and heir, with remainders on William, Edward and Thomas Dongan, second, third and fourth sons in tail male, successively.

Sir Walter, his heir, was styled of Abbottstown, County of Dublin; he was a patriot and brought four archers on horseback to the general hosting on the hills of Tara in 1593. He settled his estates in 1615, and the next year passed a patent for the manor at Kil-drought (Castletown) and other possessions; was made a baronet October 23, 1623, and died in 1626.

Sir John Dongan was Walter's son and heir; he was 23 years of age at the time of his father's death and married. He was a member of the Irish Parliament

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and a captain of horse in 1643. He had four sons, the subject of our address being the youngest. Sir Walter, his eldest son, was one of the confederate Catholics who assembled in 1646 at Kilkenny. Richard Talbot, the celebrated Earl of Tyrconnell, served under Sir Walter, who was his nephew. Sir Walter died without posterity. Oliver, the third son, was deep in the patriotic cause and was attainted in 1642. Sir William, the second son, for his devotion to his country and his adherence to the Stuarts, was compelled to fly to France, in Cromwell's time. He was among those who, through the Earl of Tyrconnell, petitioned Charles II, after the restoration of the Stuarts in 1660, for their estates, and was among the few who had them restored. Sir William, who was a knight and a baronet, was made Viscount Dongan on February 14, 1661, and on January 2, 1685, was advanced on the peerage to the earldom of Limerick, with remainder over, in default of heirs, to his brother Thomas.

William, the first earl of Limerick, was a member of the royal privy council for Ireland, lord lieutenant of the County of Kildare, governor of the province of Munster and member of the House of Lords of the Parliament convened by James II, in Dublin in 1689.

His son, Lord Dongan, was, by deputy and subdeputy clerk of the court of Common Pleas in the Irish court of Exchequer, a member of the Irish Parliament and after the resignation of his father, colonel of a regiment of dragoons, in King James' Irish army, known as Dongan's Dragoons, which, after the Boyne, gained great

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glory and fought bravely for France under the name of the King's Regiment of Dismounted Dragoons.

The entire family was devoted to the house of Stuart, the Earl of Limerick being the personal friend of Charles II, and through the Earl of Tyrconnell, who was his uncle, deep in the councils and favors of the royal cause; it was rich in landed estates and influential with the people.

In the turbulent and bloody times in Ireland, that followed in the wake of the enforcement of Elizabeth's penal laws, whereby Catholic Irishmen were deprived of all liberty of conscience, of thought, and of action, despoiled of their estates and hunted like wild beasts, and of the rebellion of 1641, and the cruelties of Cromwell, in 1649, who crushed the Irish for their adherence to the king, in whose success they fondly imagined they saw a ray of hope, a brave, self-reliant and indomitable race of Irish soldiers was made, whose life, from necessity, was one of daily battle, and whose occupation was war with the hated invader.

Among the chiefs in the fore-front of the Irish cause, the Dongans were prominent; they supported the Stuarts for love of country and freedom of conscience, and when the cause was dead they fled to France.

Amid these scenes and among these men, Thomas Dongan spent the early years of his life. A soldier and a gentleman by birth, and a patriot by instinct, he was denied by the laws of the land, unless he would forswear his religion, preferment in both war and peace.



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True to his nature, he found vent for his courage and combativeness among the French, to whom his countrymen were forced to fly to enjoy both liberty and the free exercise of their religion; he was among the earliest of the "wild geese" that flew over the waters to give renown and military glory to the Bourbon lilies.

It is very probable that he accompanied his brother and the Stuarts when they fled to France in 1649, although he may have gone after 1641, when his brother Oliver was attainted. He entered the French army at once, and served continuously; we know that he participated in all of Turenne's campaigns, until the latter's death in 1675, and was, when he resigned in 1677, the colonel of an Irish regiment in Louis XIV's army, "a place worth to him £5,000 a year." The Duke of York, who was Dongan's senior by a year, also served under Turenne until 1656, when he accepted a commission in the Spanish army. It is possible that it was in France that the Duke of York came to know Dongan, and learned to appreciate those qualities which made him, in after years, so successful as Governor of New York.

In 1677, Charles II gave peremptory orders that all his English subjects should leave France in forty-eight hours, and Dongan, loyal to authority, gave prompt obedience to the mandates of his king, resigned his commission and returned to England, leaving large arrears due him from the French government. These arrearages of pay were never received by him, for in July (27), 1686, while Governor of New York, he wrote to M. Denonville, Governor of Canada, concerning the

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relations of the French and English in their dealings with the Indians, and in the letter asked the Governor's assistance to procure for him 25,000 livres due to him from the French king for services as stated and certified to, by the intendant of Nancy before his departure, "which, when my prince called me out of the French service, I had no time to get, and as I had gone to Tangiers, and then some time after to New York, I had no opportunity of representing my case to his majesty." In a letter from Denonville to Dongan, dated September 29, 1686, the former promises to urge his matter before the French king, and does so, for among the French State papers relating to America, a letter from the king (Louis XIV) to Denonville is found, dated at Versailles, March 30, 1687, in which he says: "He has no knowledge of Col. Dongan's claim of 25 M. £., which he pretends are due to him in France. He therefore has nothing to say to him on that subject."

That ended Dongan's claim. The services he had rendered France had been forgotten in the harm he had done it in America.

On his return to England from France in 1677, he was granted by Charles II a life pension of £500 per annum, and made lieutenant-governor of Tangiers, a place, evidently, of no profit, for in a letter written by him in 1687, to the lord president of the board of trade, asking for moneys due to him, he says: "My going to Tangiers did not enrich my condition. Expences did more than Ballance my Profit." On September 30, 1682, he was made Governor of the province of New York, which

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included Nantucket, Martha's Vineyard, the District of Pemmaquid, now in Maine, and other territory in extent much larger than the present bounds of New York.

That he was commissioned at this particular time to govern so important a province is high evidence of the opinion the king and Duke of York had of his honesty, administrative and military qualities, and of his knowledge of men—a faculty characteristic of great statesmen.

The political and financial situation of the colony required a practiced hand and a man of more than ordinary skill and judgment and one thoroughly acquainted with the French and their diplomacy.

The French were aggressive, the Indians unfriendly and the colonists discontented. The administrations of Lovelace and Andros had been most tyrannical. Taxes had been levied without authority of law, the protests of the people had been treated with scorn, and their demand for a popular legislative assembly had been denied. When Andros attempted to force upon the colonists a law, enacted on his own motion establishing for three years the rate of customs, the people were inflamed to a point of resistance, and in 1680 refused to pay any more duties. The Duke of York, who evidently knew that the directors of the Dutch West India Company had stated that the company had expended 1,200,000 guilders in the government of the province over and above the revenues it had received therefrom, feared that a similar deficit would be a charge upon his private purse, sent out Dongan, as Governor, to offset French influence, to conciliate the colonists and to con-

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serve the colonial revenues. His instructions, dated January 27, 1682-3, exhibit a wonderful complaisance on the part of the Duke of York, and evinces much more of a spirit of fairness and liberality in his dealings with the colonists, than the Stuarts were giving to the king's subjects at home.

Dongan arrived in New York in August, 1683. He was received with expressions of delight and satisfaction by the colonists, because they anticipated in his coming relief from the abuses of former governors and from intolerable taxation. They found him courteous and affable, and in his carriage and demeanor dignified, as became a soldier and courtier of Louis XIV, and welcomed him both to their hearts and homes. He found the colony bankrupt, its revenue reduced, the people discontented even to rebellion; Connecticut, making a claim for a part of its territory; Pennsylvania, East and West Jersey, cutting into its trade, and consequently into its revenue; the French, warlike and aggressive, and making great inroads into the English influence among the Indians, many of whom were migrating to Canada; the forts decayed, the guns dismounted, the troops demoralized and without pay. By his beneficent acts he soon extinguished the fires of public discontent, so much so, that within a few months after his arrival the sheriffs addressed the Duke of York in most extravagant terms of gratitude and begged him to "accept their most humble and hearty thanks for sending us over the Honorable Colonel Thomas Dongan, to be lieutenant and governor of this province, of whose

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integrity, justice, equity and prudence, we had already had a very sufficient experience at our last general court of assizes."

With military promptitude he inspected all the so-called forts and their meager, half-clad and poorly-armed garrisons, and his description of their condition is sad—in view, to him, of the great interests which they guarded and the people whom they protected.

He put the province at once in a state of defense, paid the garrisons and renewed the military stores.

His labors began with his arrival, among his first acts being to circumvent William Penn and secure the Susquehanna country to New York.

In 1683, Penn and his agents visited Albany to purchase that valuable tract of land from the Onondagas and Cayugas, in fact, were in Albany when Dongan arrived in New York. Their presence created great excitement in the colony; the commissaries of Albany petitioned Dongan to prevent the sale, for the loss of that region meant the death of their beaver trade, then bad enough, and a consequent reduction in the colonial revenue. Dongan hastened to Albany, where he found the wily and astute Quaker, drew him to New York and eventually succeeded in obtaining the Indian title to those lands for the colony. Penn was outwitted. Penn, although a Quaker, was on terms of personal intimacy with the Catholic Duke of York, and a most powerful and influential man in his court, to which he returned in a short time, Dongan's determined enemy.

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The Indians recognized his influence in the matter, for when he attended at a great council of the Onondaga and Cayuga Indians in Albany, on August 2, 1684, which he called at the request of the Right Honorable Lord Howard Effingham, Governor of Virginia, who came to Albany to treat with the Indians in order to prevent their forays into Virginia, the Indians addressed him as Brother Corlaer, a title derived from the name of a Dutchman, Arent van Curler, who by reason of his services had won their favor and affection, and said that they had shown their regard for him, for when Penn wanted the Susquehanna country, they gave it, on his account, to "the great Sachem, Charles, that lives over the great lake," and confirmed the grant.

Smith, in his history of New York, says that Dongan surpassed all his predecessors in a due attention to the affairs with the Indians by whom he was highly esteemed.

I wish it were within the limits of my time to give a short sketch of the remarkable and warlike Indians, known as the Five Nations, or Iroquois, who inhabited central New York, and possessed the country in the new world that divided the historic enemies in the old world, the French and the English.

Until Dongan's time, the English had not succeeded in gaining the entire friendship of the Indians. The French, through Jesuit missionaries, had made a deep impression on the Indians, and weakened the English influence among them; they captured some of their valuable trade and had induced many to migrate to

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Canada, where their descendants, the Caughnawaga Indians, who visited Albany during the bi-centennial, still reside.

The value of the Indian trade to the colony can be estimated, because Dongan, writing of the public finances, reported on September 8, 1687, that the "revenue of the colony had been 35,000 to 40,000 beavers, besides peltry; this year only 9,000 and some hundred peltrys in all had been shipped."

Dongan held the Indians at their true value; he considered them the bulwark between the two nations, and believed that the country which secured their friendship would eventually triumph in the new world, and, with remarkable success conciliated them, and gained both their respect for his person and their friendship to the colonists.

He gained their good will by diplomacy and fair dealing, and maintained it by fighting for them against the French, against their Indian enemies, against the weaknesses of the English king, against the traders who would rob them, and against the vengeance of the sister colonies which at times they raided. He treated them as men, and never failed in his promises made to secure their coöperation; in his intercourse with them, he was frank and bold, as became a soldier, and they liked him for it; his influence was as boundless as the trouble he took to succor them and advance their interests, and his success was as remarkable as it was to be expected.

He caused the king's arms, with great formality, to be erected in all their villages, as evidence of his

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protection, and forbade them to treat with the French except through himself, to the latter's anger and humiliation.

His successful persistency in their behalf and his determination to protect them at all hazards, gained him the hatred of the French. They could neither deceive, deter nor intimidate him, nor could they get him superseded. Denonville reported him as a "very crafty man" and filled his official accounts with details of Dongan's unceasing activity, until the French took the extraordinary method of reaching him through the French king's intimacy with James, to the extent that he was forbidden, by orders from the home government, to interfere with the French in their dealings with the Indians. The English king undid the work of his lieutenant in America; as soon as he gained an advantage or strengthened the colony, the king commanded him to desist and his labor was lost.

When in 1685, M. de la Barre, Governor of Canada, projected an expedition against the Iroquois, and made a herculean effort to totally destroy them because the French could not control them, Louis XIV procured letters from the Duke of York commanding Dongan to lay no obstacles in his way. Dongan was wiser than his master and knew that the English supremacy was at stake, so he warned the Indians of the intentions of the French, sent them ammunition and promised to assist them when needful, but disease and starvation ruined the French enterprise.

Denonville, who succeeded De la Barre in 1686, intended another expedition and made secret prepara-



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tions, but was warned by Dongan, who anticipated his action, that the Indians were subjects of Great Britain, and that an attack upon them would be an infraction of the peace between France and England.

Denonville denied all such intentions but could not deceive Dongan.

The latter was tied both by instructions and the peace then existing between France and England and could not actively interfere, but he knew the weak state of the colony and the value of the Indian bulwark and wrote to Denonville that he would protect the Indians. When the French expedition became a certainty, he gave the Indians the benefit of his advice and military experience.

He met the Five Nations—Senecas, Cayugas, Onondagas, Oneidas and Mohawks—at a grand council in the city hall in Albany on August 5, 1687.

The orations delivered on the occasion by Dongan and the Indians are masterpieces of their kind. He told them that as soon as he had learned that the French had attacked their castles, he came up himself to give them assistance and advice; his propositions were full of policy, wisdom and kindness; he forbade them to kill their French prisoners, told them to make no peace without his sanction, particularly to keep faith with Governor Effingham, for at that very time there were parties of Oneidas down on the James river after spoils, and threatening them, that, if they did not stop their raids, he could not protect them longer, because one of the charges made against him was that he protected

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the New York Indians who murdered the king's subjects in Maryland and Virginia. He sent Indian runners at once to Canada to induce the Christian Indians to return, and promised them and those then in Albany English priests, for he had forbid them to have intercourse with the French Jesuits. He organized war parties and had the Indians assume the aggressive, and ordered them to bring to Albany their wives, children and old men, whom he settled temporarily at Catskill, Livingston's land and along the Hudson, and all their corn, except that which was needed by the young warriors remaining in the castles.

He returned to Albany in October, 1687, to take command of the troops stationed there, which consisted of 400 foot and fifty horse and 800 Indians, to give the Iroquois moral support and protect the colony in the event of its becoming necessary. He remained in Albany until the spring of 1688. This French expedition was also a failure, but, notwithstanding Dongan's protests, because of the moral effect on the Indians, to have peace concluded only through the English, James II, by orders, again counteracted his efforts, and a treaty was signed between the French and the Indians, in Montreal, which ended the war.

The French again contemplated the destruction of the Iroquois, and not being able to cause Dongan's removal, nor bind him by orders from his king, they were put, for the sole purpose of counteracting his efforts, to the expediency of inserting in a treaty between England and France, made in 1688, called the neutrality treaty, a

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clause by which each engaged not to interfere with the other in their wars against the Indians. England was here outwitted, and French diplomacy gained a victory over British statesmen that it could not win from Dongan. France immediately sent fresh troops to America, under the command of the veteran Count de Frontenac, and renewed the war.

Dongan, in the meantime, had been superseded; the French were successful in many of their raids; Schenectady was destroyed and its people massacred in February, 1690, and more damage done to the colony than ever had been accomplished before.

In addition to protecting the Iroquois in war, he also endeavored to make them Christians, and found his opportunity in the events of the times.

The influence of the French Jesuits over the Indians could not be over-estimated; it even divided the Five Nations, so that when the justices and commissaries of Dutch Albany petitioned for English Jesuits to be sent among them to overcome the French influence and save their trade, Dongan looked at both the religious and civic side of their appeal.

He reported their request to England, procured for the converted Indians, already in Canada, to whom he had sent runners asking their return, "a piece of land called "Serachtague (Saratoga) lying upon Hudson's river about forty miles above Albany," and promised, if they would return, to give them this land, send them priests and also build them a church, which terms the Indians accepted; he asked the government

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to send him over five or six priests, so "that three may always travel from castle to castle and the rest to live with those that are Christians."

Nothing came from the project, as far as the Indians were concerned, by reason of their distance from England and the wars then raging, but that the priests did come is evident, for it is related that Father Henry Harrison, an English Jesuit, as well as Rev. Alexander Innis, of the Church of England, the chaplain of the garrison of Fort James, spent the winter of 1687 with Dongan in Albany. The presence of Jesuits in New York about this time is shown by the annals of the order, and it is said that Dongan erected a Jesuits' college in New York, under pretense of teaching Latin to the judges, and applied to King James to appropriate the king's farm to its maintenance, but he refused. The school did not get patronage, and vanished.

It might be said that Dongan's promise to furnish priests to the Indians, and his bringing Father Harrison to Albany, in 1687, to meet them, was pure politics, revenue and trade, and on an equality with the petition of the Dutch burghers, who were willing, though they were stanch Protestants in a persecuting age, to have the Indians Catholics and tolerate Jesuits among them if they could barter rum for furs with the Iroquois.

If that act stood alone I might agree with the critic, but judging of his character by his acts, we must consider him as acting from a decided conviction as to the right and from the best and purest of motives, founded on considerations both of humanity and government.

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The influence he had in molding public acts in favor of the right to worship God according to the dictates of one's conscience, the protecting ægis that he threw over all creeds during his career as Governor, and his earnest zeal in endeavoring to shed the light of Christianity amid the gloom of paganism surrounding the Indians, taken in connection with the military exigencies of the day, are convincing proofs with his birth, training and associations, that he acted solely from a sense of duty. His love for the Indians is evidenced by all his official acts, and the regard they bore him, because of it. He used the political factors in their conversion only as a means to accomplish his objects. The Jesuits were demanded by the colonists for State reasons; the Indians wanted them, because they liked to have priests at their castles, and Dongan was willing to gratify both, from convictions foreign to either. It seems as though he wished to convert them, because he loved them, and because of their manliness and bravery, he wanted to elevate them to a higher plane of existence.

Jean de Lamberville, of the order of Jesuits, called in Indian "Teiorhensere," wrote to Dongan from Onnon-tague of date of September 10, 1685, of Dongan's services in making Christians of the Indians; and that the missionaries were among them "that the blood of Jesus Christ, shed for all men, may be useful to them and that his glory may be great throughout the earth," and asked the governor to use his great influence with the Indians for their protection.

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Denonville, the French Governor, wrote from Ville Marie, on June 20, 1686, to Dongan, concerning his French majesty's zeal for the progress of religion, and for the support and maintenance of the missionaries among the Indians, and asking for their protection, and said: "I expect from your piety that you will not be opposed to that, knowing how much you love religion."

In reply, Dongan wrote from New York, July 27, 1686: "I doubt not but your master's inclinations are very strongly bent to propagate the Christian Religion, and I do assure you that my master has no less a share in so pious intentions; for my part, I shall take all imaginable care that the fathers who preach the Holy Gospel to those Indians, over whom I have power, be not in the least ill-treated, and, upon that very accompt, have sent for one of each nation to come to me, and then those beastly crimes you reprove shall be checked severely, and all my endeavors used to suppress their filthy drunkenness, disorders, debauches, warring and quarrels, and whatsoever doth obstruct the growth and enlargement of the Christian faith among the people."

In a letter to Denonville, dated December 1, 1686, he said: "I have ordered our Indians strictly not to exercise any cruelty or insolence against them, and have written to the King, my master, who hath as much zeal as any prince living, to propagate the Christian faith, and assure him how necessary it is to send hither some fathers to preach the Gospel to the natives allyd to us, and care would be taken to dissuade them from their drunken debauches, though certainly our

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rum doth as little hurt as your brandy, and, in the opinion of Christians, is much more wholesome; however, to keep the Indians temperate and sober is a very good and Christian performance, but to prohibit them all strong liquors seems a little hard and very Turkish." Dongan exhibits his kindness to the Indians, his sensible views of life and his Milesian origin, when he thus expresses his sentiments on the prohibition question.

Whatever may have been his motives in sending priests among them, they were justifiable, both on social and political grounds. A Catholic Christian Indian was a better man, in a practical sense than a pagan one with all his cruelties and debaucheries indulged in then as a part of his religious observances.

As a matter of experience in the missionary history of the North American Indians, Catholic priests, especially the Jesuits, "the black gowns," have had more success in converting them to Christianity than all others combined. Their robes and ceremonies appealing to the Indian imagination have produced wonderful results. It was not different then; the French Jesuits had made an impression on the brave Iroquois to the extent that some had abandoned their country to follow them and others would not fight against their friends. As a grave political question, when the safety of the colony depended upon gaining their friendship, none except Jesuits could have been offered to them nor could others have produced equal results. They would have none others at that time, for

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when Dongan addressed the Five Nations at their largest representative conference in Albany on August 5, 1687, and promised them priests as an inducement to remain on friendly terms with the English, they replied that they would receive them. It is supererogation to defend an attempt to propagate the gospel, a work approved by the consensus of all Christian people, but it was a heinous offense, at that time to be a Catholic and it became the habit of colonial writers, after the revolution, in 1688, to ascribe political motives to every act of James II or his lieutenants, so that Dongan was, in subsequent years, charged with designs prejudicial to the State, in sending Jesuits among the Indians, but in the light of modern research the accusation is both false and ridiculous. The English and Dutch cared but little for the souls of the Indians and much for their furs, and Dongan should be credited with both the Christian zeal that made him endeavor to bring the Indians to the "way of the cross" and the statesmanship that such a result would produce on the colonies.

A student of the history of the Five Nations, in their relations with the French and English in America in the seventeenth century, must admit the paramount necessity to the colonists of securing their good will.

France was sending veteran troops from home, determined to crush the Indians, in order to open an avenue to New York, and England allowed them and the colonists to defend themselves without her assistance.



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The Indians suffered grievously in these wars, many were killed, they saw their castles burned, their crops destroyed, their wives and children dragged into captivity; England was reaping the benefit of their sufferings and making no corresponding sacrifices.

The Iroquois were heart-sore and weary, and sought rest from their troubles; they turned to their Christian brethren in Canada, with whom they were in communication, and contrasted their relative conditions and were inclined, not only not to fight against them and their friends, but to ally themselves with them. If that had been done, the map of northern New York would have been changed and its boundary would never have been the St. Lawrence. The migration of these Indians had already weakened the Indian bulwark, and to lose more was death to the colony, and Dongan fought against it and won and laid the foundation of the train of events which helped France to lose an empire in America.

In subsequent years the Earl of Bellomont and Brigadier Hunter endeavored to follow Dongan's policy, and rectify their neglect in the matter by supplying the Indians with Protestant missionaries. But none could be found to endure the life of hardship and live among the Indians and become a part of their existence as the Jesuits did. The government was convinced that the religious question among the Five Nations was most important, and promised them missionaries. Dominie Dellius, the Dutch minister, was quite successful, but he was banished. Their efforts in that

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direction were weak, spasmodic and futile, for the motive was political, and not of the kingdom of God.

Seventy years after Dongan's time, the political and financial necessity for the return of the Catholic Iroquois to New York still existed, and Lieutenant-Governor De Lancy wrote to the Indian commissioners in relation to bringing them back from Canada. The Saratoga lands were found not to be available for the purpose, and the project dropped.

Dongan should be credited with the fact that he did not allow his religious convictions or his desire to convert the Indians to interfere with the duty he owed to the State.

His earlier feelings towards the French Jesuits were of the kindest character. The letters of the brothers Lamberville and Father Dablon are filled with expressions of good will, gratitude and love for his endeavors to Christianize the Indians, but when events developed the political effects of the presence of the French Jesuits among them, he used every endeavor to drive them from among the Indians, and eventually did so.

He was anxious that they should be Catholics, but wanted them English and not French, loyal to his people and not to their enemies; he endeavored to supply their places with English priests, and that he did not succeed was not owing to want of faith or endeavor, but because the English Jesuits were few and not acquainted with the language of the Indians, and the wars and his short term of office prevented the full realization of his plans.

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Boundary disputes were of frequent occurrence in colonial times.

As early as 1650, Connecticut made claims to portions of the Dutch territory, and in 1663 coerced Stuyvesant to surrender a portion of Westchester county to it, and in 1664, when Nicolls was Governor, had the boundary fixed by running a line twenty miles east of the Hudson river.

When Dongan became Governor, he promptly reopened the contention, by giving orders that certain towns within the disputed territory make presentment at the New York assizes. Connecticut immediately claimed those places as indubitably her own, but found in Dongan, the Irishman, different material than it did in Stuyvesant, the Dutchman, and in the careless Nicolls, and learned that its "crowding-out" processes would not work with him.

Dongan bluntly replied, that it had deceived Nicolls in 1664 by running the line ten miles instead of twenty miles east of the river, according to the agreement, and notified Connecticut if it did not yield the disputed territory, he should proceed at once to claim the whole of the Duke's patent to the Connecticut river.

Connecticut surrendered the towns in short order and sent commissioners to New York, where, in 1684, the boundary line between the colonies was agreed upon, where it has remained since.

Similar disputes took place with Jersey in regard to the ownership of Staten Island, which was conceded to New York; and even Massachusetts claimed a good

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share of the colony, and, as an expression of her right, granted lands opposite to Fort Orange.

Prior to Dongan's time, the colonists had no voice in the enactment of laws.

They were ruled by the Governor and his council, which, with the Duke of York, was the law-making power. In 1664, the laws in force in the king's colonies and plantations were collected together and formed into a code, and delivered to the colonists at a general meeting held at Hempstead, upon Long Island, in March of that year, by virtue of a commission given by the Duke of York to Governor Nicolls. The compilation was, and is now, known as the "Duke's Laws." The laws were fair and just, substantially the same as those of England, except where the situation and condition of the colonists made departures necessary; it was a complete code, regulating administration, procedure, marriage, military affairs, and all matters except customs and taxes.

The Catholic Duke of York, while providing for the State establishment of the Church of England, therein enacted the first law in the colony, which, under the Dutch, had witnessed the persecution of the Lutherans, Baptists and Quakers, providing for the freedom of worship, by decreeing that no person (in the colony) be molested, fined or imprisoned for differing in judgment in matters of religion who profess Christianity.

Dongan's instructions, which accompanied his commission, directed him to call by writ and summons a general assembly of all the freeholders of the province in

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New York city, to be known as the "General Assembly of New York and its dependencies," to establish laws for the good of the State, subject to the Governor's and the Duke of York's consent and approval.

Under his call, the first general assembly, wherein the people of this State met to enact laws for their government was held in New York city in October, 1683.

Its first act bore the title of the "Charter of Liberties and Privileges granted by his Royal Highness to the inhabitants of New York and its dependencies."

Dongan's liberal spirit, his love of liberty and his desire to grant freedom of conscience to the colonists, which was denied to them in England and Ireland, is evidenced by every line of this remarkable document.

That it could not have passed without Dongan's direct sanction is certain, because he had the power of veto, before it could be sent to the Duke of York for final approval, and that the broad spirit of liberalism and toleration which it exhibited was his, is further evidenced by the fact, that the act was beyond his instructions for it never received the duke's complete approval and was finally specifically revoked.

This charter of liberties marks so important an era in the history of popular government in America, and is so directly connected with the heart and personality of this Catholic Irishman that I must be pardoned if I refer to it at length. I quote from the New York Civil List, page 49 *et seq.* (See, also, Col. MSS. of New York, vol. 3, p. 357.) "The first act of this, the first general assembly of the colony of New York,

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was entitled, 'Charter of Liberties and Privileges granted by his Royal Highness to the inhabitants of New York and its dependencies.' Its first sentence contained the phrase: 'people met in general assembly,' to which James objected, when he became King of England, on the ground that it is 'not found in any other constitution in America;' and this royal objection, with the character of this charter, places New York in advance of any other colony, and proves that it held the leadership in the struggle for equal rights and ancient liberties. The entire sentence read that 'under his majesty and royal highness, James, Duke of York, Albany, etc.,' 'supreme legislative power shall forever be and reside in the Governor, council and people met in general assembly.' The year of its adoption witnessed the establishment of a free and representative government in Pennsylvania, and the first session of its general assembly.

"James became King of England in February, 1685. At a meeting of the Committee of Trade and Plantations, March third, this minute was ordered entered: 'The Charter of Incorporation of the Province of New York being read, His Majesty doth not think it fit to confirm,' and the government was ordered assimilate to that projected for New England. Observations upon the charter were entered, which show that the objections were political, and demonstrate that the colonists were in advance of the inhabitants of other colonies, in their demands upon the Crown, as well as in their concessions of personal liberty.

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“The charter opened grandly. It declared ‘that, for the better establishing of the government of this province of New York, and that Justice and Right may be equally done to all persons within the same, Be it enacted by the Governor, Council and Representatives now in General Assembly met and assembled, and by the authority of the same.’ And the charter, after providing for the election of a General Assembly, enacted that the Representatives of the Province, with the Governor and his Council, shall be the Supreme and only legislative power. To this the King quietly inquired: ‘Whether this does not abridge the act of Parliament that may be made concerning New York.’ His observation upon this provision seems to be somewhat in conflict with his remarks on the provision that the inhabitants be governed by and according to the laws of England. ‘This privilege,’ he said, ‘is not granted to any of His Majesty’s Plantations.’ Of the provisions that sheriffs and other officers of justice be appointed with like powers as in England, he said, ‘This is not so distinctly granted or practiced in any other plantation.’ The charter provided ‘that the exercise of the chief magistracy and administration of the government over the said province shall be in the said Governor, assisted by a Council with whose advice and consent, or with at least four of them, he is to rule and govern the same according to the laws thereof.’ To this the king objected that ‘no other Governor is restrained from anything without the Council.’ The charter provided ‘that according to the usage, custom

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and practice of the Parliament of England, sessions of a General Assembly be held in this province once in three years at least,' to which the king objected, that triennial sessions 'are an obligation upon the government greater than has been ever agreed to in any other plantation, and the grant of such a privilege has been rejected elsewhere, notwithstanding a revenue offered to induce it.' The provision that acts be presented to the Governor and Council for approval, said the king, 'seems to take away from the Governor and Council the power of framing laws as in other plantations.' The provision limiting to two years the power of the Lord Proprietor to dissent to bills, said James, 'does abridge the King's power and has been thought inconvenient in other plantations.' The provision that the Assembly is to judge of the elections and qualifications of its members, 'may be inconvenient,' he said, 'and is not practiced in some other plantations.' Of the provision guaranteeing liberty of conscience, the king remarked that it 'is practiced in the proprietaries;' and it was the only section which he seems to have affirmatively approved, although there were other important provisions which he did not explicitly disapprove." \* \* \*

"The entire charter we are considering is a clear and crisp declaration of the ancient liberties of all Aryan freemen. The remaining portion reads substantially as follows: 'Every freeholder and freeman shall vote without restraint. No freeman shall suffer but by judgment of his peers, and all trials shall be by a jury of twelve men. No tax, tillage, assessment, custom, loan, benevo-



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lence or imposition whatever shall be laid, assessed, imposed or levied, on any of his Majesty's subjects within this province, or their estates, upon any manner of color or pretense, but by the act of the Governor, Council and Representatives of the People in General Assembly met and assembled. No seaman or soldier shall be quartered on the inhabitants against their will. No martial law shall exist. No person professing faith in God by Jesus Christ shall at any time be anyways disquieted or questioned for any difference of opinion.' Its approval by the Governor was the signal for great rejoicing.

"Thus was set forth in admirable phrase the rights for which the Dutch and English colonists had unitedly contended for nearly half a century. It was the full fruitage of freedom, bursting the shell of feudalism, and clothing itself in more perfect organic form, evolved from ancient systems, which had become incapable of preserving and protecting the liberties of the people. Alike in spirit and substance, it presented in most perfect form that which was dearest to all—to the eighteen nationalities represented in the province under Stuyvesant—to English and Dutch, their common German ancestors and Keltic neighbors, so long crushed under Druidic dominion."

This charter also provided "that every publick minister upon Long Island should be maintained according to the subscriptions. That all contracts made in New York for the maintenance of the severall ministers shall be made good." The observation on that was, "this is

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agreeable to the practice of New England, but not of his majty's other plantations." Dongan thereby provided by law for the support of the Protestant church and ministers, and made their maintenance a charge upon the respective communities, as was the law in Puritan New England.

James, by decree dated May 29, 1686, further extended the clause guaranteeing liberty of conscience and freedom of worship to all "who profess faith in God, by Jesus Christ," by granting the privilege to "all persons of what religion soever."

Thus did a Catholic King and Governor declare the rights and sanctity of conscience. The Jew, the Mahomedan and Catholic were placed on an equality with the Protestant, and all were allowed to worship God according to the dictates of conscience. The enactment shone amid the darkness of that intolerant age, for but five years; when the king and Dongan were fugitives, it was repealed, and intolerance was again triumphant. His liberality and statesmanship was again shown, when he caused a beneficent act of naturalization to be passed by this first assembly, whereby all persons professing Christianity then in the province, or who subsequently came into it, were made citizens, a privilege in those days of much importance. This was not passed to benefit the Catholics, because there were then very few in the province, but, as I believe, because Dongan knew the trend of Louis XIV's feelings toward the Huguenots, and was willing to benefit the province by attracting those people to New York.

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It fulfilled all its intendments, when, in 1685, Louis XIV, against the wishes and protestations of Pope Innocent XI, ordered the revocation of the edict of Nantes, and therewith the total abolition of all privileges theretofore possessed by the Huguenots in France, and drove from that country many of its thriftiest and readiest hands, some of whom found already prepared for them in New York, by Louis XIV's former colonel, a haven of refuge. Their descendants are among the leading New York families of to-day.

In May, 1687, the French Protestants in New York expressed their gratitude to the king for having so much goodness towards them, and for Dongan's protection and beneficence, and petitioned Dongan if they bring immigrants into the province that they be allowed trading privileges, which petition was granted in July, 1687.

His beneficence was extended to all creeds. He charmed Dominie Selyns, the Dutch minister, who wrote to the classis at Amsterdam "that Dongan was a gentleman of knowledge, politeness and friendship, that he had received a visit from his excellency and could call on him when he chose." In his report on the state of the colony (February, 1687) Dongan said "that every town ought to have a minister," of the church of England, and among his last official acts was an order to set free forthwith and to send home by the first opportunity, all Indian slaves, subjects of the King of Spain, who could give an account of their Christian faith and say the Lord's Prayer.

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Dongan was at all times anxious to increase the population, and consequent wealth, of his province, and did so to some extent by his naturalization law.

His reports show that he feared the lack of English-born subjects in the colony and he petitioned that some endeavors be made to send Englishmen to protect the country. He reported "for seven years not over twenty English, Scotch and Irish families came into the province, but many Dutch and some French," and as early as February 18, 1684, he recommended that a ship "go constantly between New York and Ireland and bring passengers for New York" and when on September 8, 1687, he wrote to the lord president and called for assistance against the French, he said, "my lord, there are people enough in Ireland who had pretences to estates there and are of no advantage to the country and may live here very happy. I do not doubt, if his majesty thinks fit to employ my nephew he will bring over as many as the king will find convenient to send who will be no charge to his majesty after they are landed."

Unfortunately it was not done. What speculations may we not indulge in as to the probable influence of those brave children of Drogheda, Wexford and Clonmel, "with pretences to estates" upon the history of our country and the status of the Irish in America to-day, if Dongan's prayers had been granted and those patriotic people welcomed to our soil, as freemen, over two hundred years ago.

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King Charles II died February 6, 1685, and was succeeded by the Duke of York, his brother, under the title of James II.

New York, theretofore a Duchy, was annexed to the crown as a royal province; all its officers were continued in power by royal proclamation, but Dongan was subsequently recommissioned as the king's lieutenant as well as Governor on June 10, 1686.

I spoke before concerning the bankrupt state of the colony when Dongan arrived. The French attacks on the Indians, which followed his arrival, not only increased the public burdens, but also, by interfering with the fur trade, had decreased the public revenues.

Taxes were laid which the people could not pay, but the lack of public funds did not deter Dongan from protecting the colony; he spent his private fortune and borrowed money on his personal credit to advance the public interests, with the usual results to those who serve the people too well.

A letter from the duke's committee, bearing date of March 10, 1683-4, refers to his asking for £1,500 to pay his debts, and defers its payment. Another of November 1, 1684, again procrastinates about his request for money—a demand which to them “seems soe reasonable and soe much yr right.” In 1686, his salary was raised from £400 to £600 per annum, but no moneys were sent to pay his debts, contracted for the public welfare. In his celebrated report on the state of the colony, of date of February 22, 1687, made to the committee on trades and plantations, he complains that he

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has to run the government without public funds, and says, substantially: "It is a very hard thing upon mee that, coming over hither in troublesome times, finding noe revenue established, and yet having three garrisons to look after and the forts with rotten timbers and dismounted guns, a contest with Canada, and having to purchase large tracts of land for the government, to support the Assembly, to receive commissioners, run boundary lines and pay salaries."

In a letter to the lord president of the board of trade, not dated, (vol. 3, Doc. Hist. of N. Y., p. 428) he speaks of the loss of colonial revenues and his great expenditures in paying troops, and repairing forts, and complained how much the king owed him and he owed the people because of it. The fact that he did this is remarkable when taken in connection with his zeal to advance the English power in America, because in those days men were colonial governors for revenue only, and Dongan should not ordinarily have had love of country as a spur, for he had been in France since a boy, to which country he had been driven a fugitive. He urged the annexation of Connecticut, Rhode Island, East and West Jersey and part of Pennsylvania to New York, to prevent a diversion of trade, and thus to increase the revenue, and also to lessen the cost of government.

He wanted to establish a mint and post-houses along the Atlantic coast from Carolina to Nova Scotia, the latter request being acceded to, but he was sent "noe power to doe it."

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In April, 1686, he granted a charter to New York city, and in July another to Albany. Both of these remarkable documents, engrossed on parchment, are still in existence, and can be seen among the archives of the respective cities. We can not enter into a disquisition on the charters, except to say that they were carefully drawn and were so liberal in the privileges given to the people, that although they were granted in the days of the Stuarts, they are the basis of the government of these two American cities to-day; the Dongan charter of Albany not having been superseded until 1870, and then its privileges and liberties were incorporated into a charter granted to it that year.

At the very time Dongan was granting these popular charters, the king, his master in England, was revoking those of the oldest municipalities in his realm. Among the charges presented against him by his enemies to the king, was that the people of New York were granted extraordinary privileges in their charter; but the mayor and common council petitioned the king in Dongan's behalf with warm words of praise and gratitude, and the accusation fell with the others.

A man of such unceasing activity, so full of fight for the rights of his people, and so uniformly successful in defending them could not but expect to make enemies.

It is the way of the world, and Dongan's experience was no exception.

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These enemies were all to his credit and each by his enmity bore testimony to Dongan's integrity and power.

Penn was Dongan's enemy at the Court of Whitehall for his successes over Pennsylvania; Connecticut and New Jersey were bitter over boundary and trade matters, which Dongan would not allow them to steal; Massachusetts feared his colonial policy of consolidation, the French pursued him through all the mazes of diplomacy and war, and those in the colony who would rob it and debauch the Indians endeavored to have him superseded.

John Santem, collector and receiver of the colonial revenue, preferred charges against him. They were dismissed, and Santem, who was found to be a defaulter in the sum of £3,000, was sent to England for trial. The petition of the corporation of New York to the king in Dongan's behalf, refuting the Santem charges, is couched in most heartfelt expressions of confidence in his honesty and gratitude for his services. He recommended that some person of wealth and prominence in the colony be appointed in Santem's place, because those that were sent out usually endeavored to make a fortune in a few years, but his interest in the colony was again set at naught and Matthew Plowman received the office.

In 1686, he heard rumors that Penn had caused his removal and that he was going to be ordered back to the army. His official life was unassailable, his enemies therefore endeavored to persuade the king that his military skill was necessary to the army, in order to remove him from New York.



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He petitioned the king in person in 1686, and the lord president of the board of trade in 1687 to be allowed to remain until he had paid his debts, because he had left a fortune in France when he left there in pursuance of the king's command to serve in his army.

The rumor also reached him from Canada, which received it by way of Paris.

On January 22, 1687-8, he wrote to the king that he had just received a letter from the Earl of Tyrconnell, wherein the earl sets forth that it will be requisite for his majesty's service that he go home and says that he consents to serve his king in his armies, but asks that money be remitted to pay his debts before he leaves, because the king is in debt to him and he to the people because of it.

About this time, Dongan's recommendations as to colonial unity were adopted.

King James, in 1688, ordered the union of all his colonies in America, north of Delaware and Pennsylvania, into one common government, to be known as New England in America, and presumably through French influence, Dongan was superseded, and Sir Edmond Andros was appointed Governor. He was notified by royal command, of the change, on April 28, 1688, and ordered "to repair to our Royall presence, where you may expect from us marks of our Royall favor and assurance of our entire satisfaction in your good services during your gov't of our Colony."

The change in the form of government was not popular, and helped materially in weakening the king's cause in

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America. The colonists had been made to believe that the king had sold New York to the French, and that Dongan was to be removed because he was not "such an ill person as to deliver it," and that Andros was to be sent over to do it.

The belief shows the popular idea of Dongan among the colonists, and illustrates a public sentiment in his favor, which protected him when a fugitive a year later. His accounts as Governor were passed, and the colony turned over to Andros in August, 1688.

He was offered by the king, the position of major general in the British army and a regiment, both of which he declined, and retired to his farm on Long Island.

We must transfer our attention, now, to Europe, where events were happening which had great effect on Dongan's life.

In 1688, the English people revolted against the Stuarts; William and Mary were made rulers of England; in 1690, the battle of the Boyne was fought and lost and James II and his faithful followers were fugitives in France.

The Dongans in Europe remained loyal to their king. Dongan's nephew, Lord Dongan, was killed at the Boyne, at the head of his dragoons, and his brother, the Earl of Limerick, continuing steadfast to the royal cause, retired to France.

Dongan, on the death of his nephew, became the next in succession to the title and estates of the Earl of Limerick.

The revolution of 1688, has its reflex action in America where it took a decidedly anti-Catholic turn.

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Jacob Leisler, a fanatical trader of New York, seized the government, and as there was no excuse for his action, he made one, by declaring he had captured the forts and taken charge of public affairs to preserve the Protestant religion.

There happened to be a few Catholic soldiers in the garrison, who were at once disarmed, and much ado made over their presence. He caused rumors to be circulated of Catholic plots to deliver the government over to France, and, although Dongan was living peaceably on his farm on Long Island, he was wrongfully and maliciously accused with intent to create public sentiment, of all sorts of cabals and schemes to capture the forts and resume his power.

The train bands denounced him as a papist, and had him confined a prisoner on his place at Hempstead, but he escaped to New Jersey and took passage for England.

His vessel got only as far as Neversink, where it laid for sixteen days battling with adverse winds. Dongan was sick and resolved to sail back, choosing rather to die on shore than at sea, and returned to New Jersey.

Leisler sent out eighteen men to disarm all the Catholics on Long and Staten islands, and to search their houses. They found four guns in Dongan's mill-house and magnified the fact to one of great importance. The Catholics were hunted like wild beasts and driven into the woods.

Leisler, by proclamation, dated February 15, 1689, and February 21, 1689, ordered the arrest of Dongan, and of

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all "such persons who are reputed papists," or who held commissions under him.

Many fled and got away with Dongan, but more were arrested and imprisoned. Dongan's property was seized, and even his servants were imprisoned. He was hunted out of New Jersey and fled to Rhode Island, where he met Sir Edmond Andros, who had also been arrested in Massachusetts, but who had escaped; but in September, 1689, he was reported "now in these parts again (New York); he has ranged all the country and is mett daily by several." Dongan, who had granted the colonists the right to worship God according to the dictates of conscience, was a fugitive because of his religion. He was pursued by those to whom he had been both tolerant and liberal, but he had the sympathy of the most influential men in the colony, like Bayard, Van Courtland, Schuyler and Livingston, who refused to recognize Leisler, and were persecuted for their opposition to him, so he was not apprehended.

Albany held out against Leisler until he refused to send troops to defend her against the threatened French invasion which culminated in the massacre at Schenectady, she then surrendered to his lieutenant, Jacob Milbourne.

Leisler and Milbourne were subsequently hung, but not because they were religious fanatics, in fact, that was their defense.

Dongan was in Boston during the greater part of the year of 1690, from which place he sailed, arriving in England in 1691. While it may not be germane to inquire

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into what took place in New York after Dongan left, the public acts of the succeeding general assemblies bear testimony to Dongan's personality and influence, in the remarkable regard for popular rights shown by the charters granted and the legislation enacted during his governorship.

Between 1683, the date of Dongan's charter of liberties and privileges, and the bill of rights, passed in 1691, the people did not change, but the rulers did; in 1691 the same people passed a bill of rights, wherein it was enacted that no person who professed faith in God by Jesus Christ, His only Son, should be molested on account of his religion, provided, however, "that nothing herein mentioned or contained shall extend or to give liberty for any persons of the Romish religion to exercise their manner of worship, contrary to the laws and statutes of their majesty's kingdom of England."

In 1684 they begged for Jesuits, but in 1700, by statute, priests were expelled from the colony under penalties of perpetual imprisonment and death, and people harboring them were subject to a fine of £200, to be set in the pillory, and to be imprisoned in default of bonds for good behavior.

An act passed in 1701 forever prohibited a papist or popish recusant from voting for any office in the colony.

In 1715, an act declaratory of Dongan's naturalization act of 1683 was passed, which, while it secured property rights acquired under it, provided and allowed only for all future times to come, for the naturalization of Protestants.

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We mention these laws without comment, for they were enacted by the same persons who passed Dongan's beneficent statutes, as examples of the powers possessed by the colonial Governors, and as proof conclusive that the acts of 1683 were Dongan's in thought, word and deed.

He returned to England to reside, at least forty-two years after he left Ireland to go to France, and found his brother, the Earl of Limerick, a fugitive in France, and all the rich Dongan estates confiscated.

The confiscations comprised the castle, manor and lands of Castletown-Kildrough, and other noble estates in the counties of Kildare, Dublin, Carlow, Meath, Kilkenny, Longford, Tipperary and Queens, containing 26,480 acres, besides house property in Dublin city, and some impropriate rectories, glebes, advowsons and tithes. The lands, with much more, were given to the Dutch Lieutenant-General, Baron de Ginkell, created Earl of Athlone and Baron of Aughrim, as a reward for his successes against the Irish.

The rectories, with the glebes in the county of Tipperary, were in 1703 made over to the trustees for the augmentation of small livings and other ecclesiastical uses, as was that of Castletown-Kildrough, in the county of Kildare, the Dongan residence.

Dongan had taken no part in the rebellion, was not a party to or a member of any cabal or conspiracy, had had no entangling alliances, and, as far as the king was concerned, had an absolutely clean record, and was recommended to his favor by reason of his age and distinguished services to the state.

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When the Dongan estates were seized, no discriminations were made, and the forfeiture included Thomas' private estates in Queen's county, inherited from his father.

The first Earl of Limerick died in France, childless, in 1698, and Dongan succeeded to the title and became the second Earl of Limerick.

He claimed the exemption of his private estates from the forfeiture, and also the Castletown estates, under the settlement made thereof, by his grandfather, in 1615, but got neither.

I quote from Gerard (Mag. of Am. Hist., July, 1886, tit. Dongan's Charter) as to his career after he left America: "When Governor Dongan returned to England, he seems not only to be in reduced circumstances, but to have been almost impoverished. He made several applications to regain his family estates, the title deeds to which had been lost through the troublous times. He appealed, also, for payment of long arrearages of pension and for his advances to the government while in America. He states in one of his petitions that he is old and poor, and that at least £17,000 is due him. He was at first allowed £2,500, and subsequently William III made an order in council, reciting the facts of his case, and the inability of the earl to live in England without some payment and that he was disposed to live upon a small estate he had in America; and it was ordered that a small prize vessel of 160 tons and eight guns be given to the earl to assist him in transporting him and his goods to

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America and to be retained by him there. An act of Parliament was also passed in May, 1702, recognizing his succession to his brother's estates, but he was only to be allowed to redeem these on the payment of claims of purchasers from the Earl of Athlone.

"Dongan also petitioned Queen Anne in 1704, stating that if a third of what was due him were paid, he would release the rest, and that it would be better under the circumstances to live in Turkey than in England. In a petition referred to the commissioners of the treasury in 1714, he states that after paying his brother's debts and his own he had but little left for his support."

"In a petition for arrears of pay, he relates that the state revenues (of New York) being small, he was obliged to mortgage his lands and sell his plate and furniture to meet the French invasion of 1686, and that the war lasted one and one-half years, during which he disbursed £10,000, almost his entire fortune."

"By his will made in July, 1713, he provides that he is to be buried by his kinsmen Richard Barnwell at an expense of not over £100; and, after certain legacies he leaves the residue of his estate to his niece, formerly Bridget Barnwell and to her husband, Colonel Christopher Nugent."

Colonel Nugent was the son of Lady Bridget Dongan, sister of Thomas, by Francis Nugent of Dardistown.

Nugent was a member of Parliament in 1689, and lieutenant-colonel of horse under James II; after the



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Boyne, in 1691, he commanded the horse regiment of Sheldon, in the Irish brigade, in the service of France; he fought in Flanders, Germany and Italy; accompanied the first Pretender to Scotland in 1715 and 1716; took part in every French campaign from 1692 until 1718, and died in 1731, a marechal de camp, or major-general of horse, one of the bravest and most distinguished of the Irish soldiers in the armies of Louis XIV and Louis XV. Thomas Dongan died in the faith of his fathers, in 1715. He had never been married, and when he died, the title of the Earl of Limerick became extinct in the Dongan family. He was buried in St. Pancras churchyard in London, where his tombstone bears the following inscription:

THE RIGHT HON. THOMAS DONGAN,

EARL OF LIMERICK,

DIED, DECEMBER 14, 1715,

AGED 81 YEARS.

REQUIESCAT IN PACE. AMEN.

His estate in America, not of great value 200 years ago, for lands were then very cheap, consisted of a house and lot in New York, a farm at Hempstead, lands in Martha's Vineyard and 25,000 acres of land at Castleton, Staten Island; the latter he had erected into a manor and lordship of Cassiltowne, evidently named after the family manor in Ireland.

His kinsmen, Thomas, John and Walter Dongan, appear to have been domiciled in New York in 1715, for, by deed in May of that year, he directed a mes-

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suage and house in New York, and also a tract called the Vineyard, to be sold for his and their benefit. They must have succeeded to his estates in America, for in 1723 a private act was passed by the assembly of New York "to enable Thomas Dongan and Walter Dongan, two surviving kinsmen of Thomas, late Earl of Limerick, to sell some part of their estate for the payment of their debts, and discharging some incumbrances wherewith the same is now charged," and a similar act was passed in 1726.

Descendants of these kinsmen of Dongan are alive in America to-day.

The arms of Dongan, as Earl of Limerick, are technically described as follows:

"Arms. Quarterly. 1st and 4th gu. three lions passant, or, each holding in dexter paw a closed helmet arg. garnished of the second.

"2nd and 3rd. az. six plates arg.; on a chief, or, a demi lion rampant, gu.

"Crest. A lion, pass. or, supporting with the dexter foot, a close helmet, ar. garnished of the first."

His personal arms, which he used according to the custom of colonial Governors as and for the privy seal of the colony, are the same as above, except that the third quarter is, "az. a talbot pass. arg."

The personal arms, adopted by the Dongan Club as its seal, were taken from an impression on a document, now in the State department, made in 1686.

Dongan, the statesman and soldier died an impoverished and a disappointed man.

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His life was worthier of a happier old age; but if those who do their duty on earth can have communion after death with mortality, and can participate in the panegyrics made upon them, Dongan did not suffer in vain.

He has had his due meed of praise since, for all who have written concerning him or his times have done honor to his life and virtues.

Mrs. Lamb, in her History of New York, says that "he had broad, intelligent views, was an accomplished politician, and was essentially a man for the times. He was a ready talker, bland and deferential to his associates and fitted to inspire confidence in all around him. He has been justly classed among the best of our colonial Governors."

In Winsor's Narrative and Critical History of America (vol. 3, p. 404), it is said that Dongan, "though a Roman Catholic, an Irishman and a soldier, proved himself to be an excellent and prudent magistrate."

Smith, the colonial historian of New York, says that he "was a man of integrity, moderation and genteel manners, and though a professed papist, may be classed among the best of our Governors."

Lossing calls him "the liberal and just Governor," and writes that he stood by the people as long as he could and until he was ordered to surrender the government into the hands of Andros, a supple tool of James II.

Gerard says that "Dongan was a man of experience in war and politics, and filled the public duties

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of his difficult post with activity and wisdom ; he was considerate and moderate in his government, just and tolerant, and his personal character was that of an upright and courteous gentleman."

Hinckley, of Plymouth, one of the most zealous of Puritans, says that "he was of a noble and praiseworthy mind and spirit, taking care that all the people in each town do their duty in maintaining the minister of the place, though himself of a different opinion from their way."

That, in connection with what I have already quoted as having been written by Dominie Selyns, expresses the opinion of contemporaneous protestants as to his liberal character in dealing with the religious opinions of others, a quality of transcendent merit, in an age, in which, to use the language of Robertson, the celebrated historian, "when not only the idea of toleration, but even the word itself in the sense now affixed to it, was unknown."

Dongan administered the government to the satisfaction of his king and the gratification of the colonists ; no scandals attached to his office, and instead of robbing the State, it robbed him. His record was clean, his personal character stainless, and his ability commensurate with his great official responsibilities.

His prominent characteristic was a firm devotion to duty. As a boy his duty to Ireland made him a soldier and he fought the English because of it; as a soldier of France, he gave her the best years of his life and all his talents; when called back by his king, his work

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made him smother his feelings for the wrongs of his native country, and his love for France, and he baffled the French to serve the English.

Fortune did not stand in the way of duty; he left one in France and spent another in America to benefit the State, and, considering that money values have increased tenfold in two centuries, his pecuniary sacrifices were enormous.

Zealous and devoted to his own religion, he endeavored to foster all others, but when duty demanded the expulsion of the French Jesuits, they did not stand on the order of their going, but went.

As a statesman, dealing with human rights, he was a century in advance of his times.

His municipal charters were models of legal acumen, and founded so deep in the true principles of government, that they have survived unto this day. His celebrated Charter of Liberties did not die when revoked; it simply slept. It was like a seed planted; although hidden, it worked its purposes in nature, and blossomed forth, when fully ripe, a perennial oak in the Constitution of the United States.

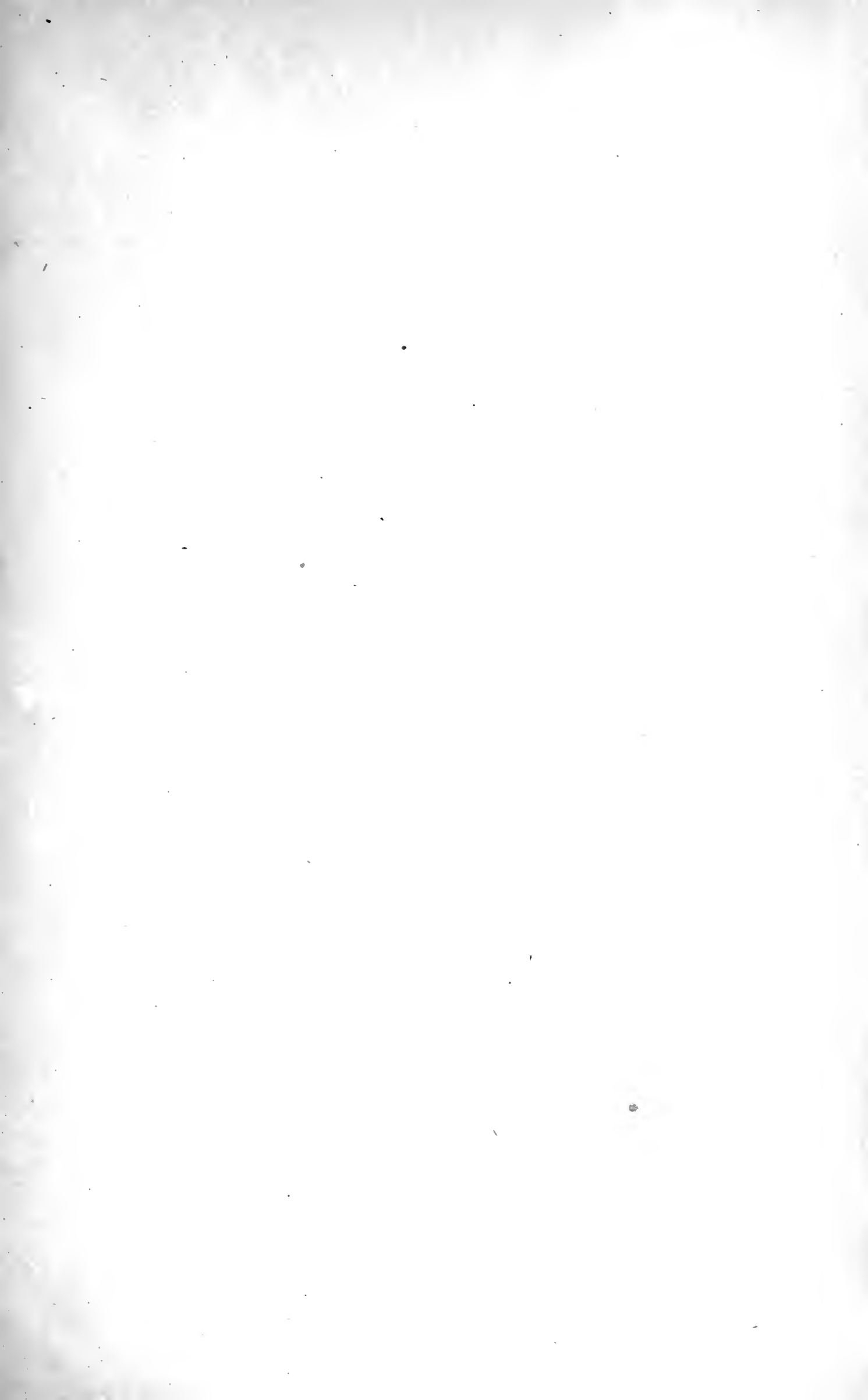
We have spoken of matters, not in their historical sequence, but have grouped them to show the man. We have not done him justice and have left much unsaid, but if our feeble efforts will but slightly increase popular knowledge of Dongan, and justify in your minds the founding of a club, bearing his honored name, we will not have labored in vain.













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